

About NHHEAF's Center for College Planning

Each year, the Center for College Planning (CCP) at The NHHEAF Network is dedicated to providing students and families with free valuable information about the college planning process. Through virtual and in-person programming, our counselors serve students and families across the state, including 100% of public high schools. The CCP offers an array of early awareness, college and career planning, and financial aid programs for K-12 students, parents, and school counselors.



Welcome!

Congratulations on beginning the college journey! As you begin the winding road to college, the Center for College Planning (CCP) is here for you. Be it in-person or virtual, the CCP remains dedicated to providing students and families with free and valuable information about the college planning process.

This College Insider is designed to demystify the college planning experience. Think of it as your textbook to College Planning 101 – here you will find chronological guidance on the steps of the college planning process. There are many College Guru Tips found throughout this booklet which provide expert advice from professionals in the field.

Good luck and enjoy the journey, NHHEAF's CCP Counselors

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Planning for College

Start with Career Exploration

What do you want to be in the future? Whether or not you have a career in mind, high school is the perfect time to research and explore.

EXPLORE YOUR INTERESTS

Spend time reflecting on what you enjoy: personally, academically and professionally. How might those interests translate into a career?

UTILIZE AN APTITUDE ASSESSMENT

Aptitude assessments can help you identify your natural strengths, and what careers might bring you success. Book a **Career and Aptitude Exploration Appointment** with us to conduct your assessment and we'll walk you through your results, what they mean, and your next steps on your path to success.

RESEARCH

There are hundreds of jobs in countless different industries. Using your aptitude assessment results, look into jobs and industries that fit your personality, values and motivations. Do research on your own to try to answer some of these questions: What kind of lifestyle do people in those careers have? What hours do they work? What is their primary motivation-humanitarian, research, salary, notoriety? What is their work environment like? Is there travel involved? Fast-paced or more at your own speed? Also consider if this field is growing- will there be demand for this career when I graduate? (In your Career Exploration Appointment, we'll go through these factors, too). These are great questions to think about in researching the best career for you. It's not just about the work itself!

DO A JOB SHADOW, EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITY (ELO), OR INTERNSHIP

Taking the time to learn about a career can both inspire you and let you know if you are on the right path. Getting to know professionals in your desired field allows you to ask questions and identify if the career may or may not be a good fit. This is also a chance to gain transferrable skills like punctuality, problem solving, and effective communication in the workplace.

CREATE A PLAN

What will you need to do to achieve your career goals? Many industries require some type of job training or higher education. Think: apprenticeships, associate degrees, or bachelor degrees. Identify what your chosen career requires of entry level workers and use these prerequisites to create a plan. Knowing what education you need to achieve your career goals can help ensure you choose a program that is worth your time and money. We're here to help you create that planbook an appointment today!

BE FLEXIBLE

Each student has their own path and there is not only one way to achieve a goal. If you decide on a career in high school and change your mind later, that is okay! If you find yourself reevaluating your path, return to the first step of exploring your interests and strengths with questions like, "What am I good at?" or "What do I enjoy?"

Choosing a College Major

With over 1,800 college majors to choose from, choosing one can seem daunting. While many college students change their major, it is still important to have an idea of how your interests and talents translate into various programs of study. Here are a few steps to help you research and choose a college major:

Examine and compare course requirements for different majors from different colleges. Most college websites include detailed information about programs of study. Many include curriculum and course requirements, career outcomes and statistics, and possible internship opportunities. This information might make a possible major or college stand out.

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College Planning Suggested Timeline

ALL FOUR YEARS

 Take a challenging core course of study: If you undertake a rigorous core course of study and challenge yourself to do your best work during your high school career, you may enjoy a wider range of options after graduation. Four years of English At least three years of math (some majors have a minimum requirement of pre-calculus or calculus) At least three years of a lab science Three to four years of social studies Two years of the same world language (some colleges require three consecutive years)
Participate and get involved in school, community or work: Do things that foster your sense of community, responsibility time management, and leadership to demonstrate these key aspects of your character.
Freshman & Sophomore Years Begin exploring career and major options: Try job shadows, volunteer opportunities, informational interviews, and aptitude assessments (see page 3).
☐ Talk with your school counselor: Stay connected to your school staff and share your postsecondary goals to ensure you are on the correct academic path and meeting all college prep requirements.
■ Begin creating a college resume: Create a format for your college resume that you can continue to update as you engage in new activities (see sample on page 15).
Considering playing an NCAA sport in college? Begin researching NCAA guidelines and high school academic requirements to ensure your eligibility by visiting eligibilitycenter.org.
Begin preparing and studying for the PSAT or PreACT: The summer between 10th and 11th grade is a perfect time to state using FREE tools to prep for the practice versions of the SAT and ACT (see page 10).
Junior Year FALL
Attend a college fair: To see a list of both local and regional college fairs go to neacac.org.
☐ Take the PSAT or PreACT: These are practice versions of the college entrance exams.
☐ Continue studying for the spring SAT or ACT: If you do even 30 minutes of prep twice a week, you will be ready to face the test this spring (see page 10)!
WINTER
Register for senior year courses: Remember, colleges will see your senior year classes and grades.
Consider special academic programs to earn college credit while still in high school: Advanced Placement (AP), Running Start or eStart, SNHU in the High School, etc.
SPRING Attend Destination College: For details about this FREE Center for College Planning event, go to destinationcollege.org.
☐ Take the SAT or ACT: NH high school juniors, take the SAT during the school day for free (see page 10).
Begin researching and developing a list of colleges you are interested in attending: You can utilize college search engine visit campus websites, or take campus tours (see pages 3, 6-9, and 12-14). Make sure each school on your list has a program or major that will help you achieve your career goals! This requirement can help you narrow down your search.
☐ Interested in Architecture, Art, Dance, Theater or Music? Inquire with each college to determine if a portfolio or audition is required. Both can be extensive, so the more time you have to prepare, the better (see page 16).

SUMMER

	have viable financial options to choose from in spring of senior year.
	Start working on your college essay: Utilize the summer to get your thoughts organized and start your essay so you won't have to "cram" it all in during the fall (see page 20).
	Attend a College Boot Camp: Your high school may offer a "boot camp" in the summer to get students started on the college application process or admissions essay. If not, attend one hosted by the Center for College Planning. Go to nhheaf.org for details.
Se FA	nior Year LL
	Narrow down your list of colleges: Try using the 2-2-2 approach (see page 17).
	Retake the SAT or ACT: You are responsible for sending your scores to ALL schools that require them. Go to collegeboard.org or act.org to learn how to send your scores.
	Get organized! Create a list that includes important information for your colleges of choice. Include deadlines, financial aid requirements and forms needed (See our College Application Checklist on page 26).
	File your FAFSA: This form is an essential part of college applications and financial aid. It becomes available on October 1st and the sooner you file, the better! Book an appointment with NHHEAF's CCP and we'll walk you through it, step by step, until you hit submit. To book an appointment go to calendly.com/nhheaf_ccp .
	CSS Profile: Also available on October 1st, the financial aid form is required by many private colleges. Check with your schools for their requirements and deadlines.
	Work on college applications: Colleges use many different online applications. Check with each of your colleges to determine which they use.
WI	NTER
	Submit completed college applications: Deadlines can vary, but January 1st is a common date. It's smart to get your applications done before your winter break so you don't have to worry about them during your time off. For a list of admission deadline options, see page 16.
	Apply for scholarships: There are scholarships from national, regional, and local sources, but to receive any scholarship, you need to apply! (see page 23)
	College decision letters arrive: Every college has their own "turn around" time from when you apply to when their decision is sent, but a realistic time frame is four to eight weeks from when you submit your application.
	RING
	Once you have been accepted, the college will send you a financial aid offer: For help interpreting your offer, attend a Paying for College 101 program at your high school or go to nhheaf.org and book a Reviewing Financial Aid Offer Letters appointment.
	Compare financial aid offers and calculate your estimated loan debt: Go to the "Student Loan Calculator" at nhheaf.org for help estimating your future loan payment(s).
	Make one last visit to your school of choice before sending your deposit: Many colleges offer "admitted student days" where accepted students can visit the campus, meet faculty, and sample campus life one more time. If you can't visit, revisit the website and call admissions with any last minute questions.
	MAY 1st – National Candidate Reply Day: Accepted students must send in their admission deposit by this deadline in order to secure their spot in the upcoming freshman class. Planning to live on campus? A housing deposit may also be due at this time.
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☐ Visit college campuses: Look for opportunities to get on different types of campuses; rural and urban, small, medium,

Begin a family conversation about a college budget and each family member's realistic ability to contribute financially:

Getting on the same page about what your family can afford can help you build your list of schools and ensure you

and large. Get a feel for what you like and remain open to a variety of options (see pages 7 and 12-13).

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Starting Your Search

Finding Your Ideal Campus

TYPE OF INSTITUTION:

Is the school a college or a university, public or private, two-year, four-year, religious, military or technical? Does the campus focus on pre-professional programs, cooperatives, or liberal arts?

SIZ

How many students are full-time? What is the student to faculty ratio? Are there more classes in lecture halls to accommodate large attendance, or more small, intimate seminars? How many commute? Are there resident graduate students? What is the average undergraduate class

DEMOGRAPHICS:

What percentage of students are from New England? Is diversity embraced on the campus? What is the gender ratio?

LOCATION:

Think about how access to a city could impact your experience. Is the campus urban, rural or somewhere in between with access to both? How far is the nearest internship, clinical affiliation,

or volunteer site for your major?

CURRICULUM:

What are the academic requirements to graduate? Will there be an opportunity to experience different types of elective courses?

PROXIMITY TO HOME:

Do you want to stay close to your family and friends or would you be comfortable coming home only twice a year? How will the distance impact the cost of attendance?

ACTIVITIES:

Does the campus offer sports, fine arts, or other extracurricular activities that are important to you? Is there easy access to off-campus programs?

OUTCOMES:

What is the graduation rate? How many students with your intended major are employed within six months of graduation? What percentage of students successfully repay student loans? Visit nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator for answers to some of these questions.

COSTS:

What are the billable costs (tuition, fees, room and board) as well as the indirect costs (books, transportation, supplies, etc.)? How could financial aid help you manage these costs?

ADMISSIONS POLICY:

Is the school "need-blind" or "need-sensitive?" If a school is "need-blind," then it will make an admissions decision without regard to your family's ability to pay. If the school is "need-sensitive," your family's ability to pay is taken into consideration as part of the admissions process.



Try a free college search engine. Big Future (**bigfuture.org**) allows you to search for colleges by program or degree, location, size, and more.

Getting to Know the College

Creating a college list is intimidating. When you begin research on sites like **bigfuture.org** and **petersons.org**, or speak to family and friends, your can grow quickly. It is typical to begin the process of applying to college with a very large list of schools. Visiting campus, either virtually or in-person, gives students the opportunity to narrow their list and find schools that fit them socially, professionally, and academically.

Can't visit all your campuses before you apply and are admitted? No Problem! Many colleges offer Admitted Student Days in the spring so admitted students can visit before making their final decision.

NHHEAF is here to help with this part, too! Book an **Exploring Options** appointment to get one-on-one counseling on building your college list.

Taking the Tour & Virtual Opportunities

TAKE A CAMPUS TOUR

Pick a time when there will be someone available to meet with you and give you a tour. Many colleges post tour times and availability on their websites. Make the most of your visit, try the food, and, if you're planning to dorm, check out a residence hall. Remember, whether or not you live on campus, it will be your second home; you'll want to make sure it's a good fit. While you're there, collect newspapers or activity calendars to get a sense of campus life.

TAKE A VIRTUAL TOUR

Virtual tours allow families to save money and visit schools near and far. This is a great way to get a sense of the campus layout and "visit" a few buildings, like the dining hall, the library, and residence halls. Use websites like **campustours.com**, **youvisit.com**, or a college's website to begin a campus tour from the comfort of your couch.

ATTEND AN INFORMATION SESSION

Many campuses now offer virtual information sessions and have playlists of videos from the admissions office in which they describe their campus. Information sessions and pre-recorded videos are a great way to hear about majors, special programs, admission requirements, and updates or changes to their admissions process.

PARTICIPATE IN A STUDENT PANEL

These events can help prospective students learn about a campus and its culture, from a student lens. Panels may focus on specific college departments, for example, "meet the school of engineering faculty and students" or be broader like, "ask a student" panels. Both are great opportunities to hear directly from current students.

FOLLOW THEM ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Nearly every college has an account on social media sites. Often student-run, these accounts show happenings on campus and feature different information than what you might read on the college website.



Questions to Ask Student Tour Guides and Other Current Students:

Do many students go home on the weekend?

What did you do last weekend on campus?

What types of activities are you involved in on campus?

How accessible are professors outside of class?

What type of tutoring or support services are available on campus?

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Academic Support Services

Although students work hard on "getting in" to college, the real work starts once you "get in." Colleges offer a variety of services and resources to support student academic success. But just as no two colleges are alike, no two academic support programs are alike. Do research and make sure a school offers the support services you will need to be successful. Types of offerings may include:

- Drop-in or scheduled one-on-one subject matter tutoring
- Writing support centers
- Math support centers
- Study skills tips, tools or workshops

Special Campus Programs to Consider

HONORS PROGRAMS

Colleges can invite students who meet certain academic criteria to enter an honors program. These programs offer a small cohort of students the opportunity to take accelerated and challenging classes. Other benefits can include priority registration, honors housing, and greater potential for research opportunities.

INTERNSHIPS

The opportunity to gain professional experience while potentially earning academic credit. These are often unpaid and can range from one semester to an entire academic year.

CO-OPS

These programs allow students to alternate between traditional classes and workplace opportunity a semester at a time. Co-ops are related to the student's major and are often paid, and might extend the length of a bachelor's program.

STUDY AWAY

Study away programs allow students to take classes in a different state or internationally. Colleges may also offer short-term travel programs during breaks. To learn more about international programs, visit **ccisabroad.org**.

BACHELORS TO MASTERS PROGRAMS

Upon graduation, these programs allow students to transition immediately from a bachelor's program to a graduate program. Bachelors to Masters programs can also shorten the total years a student needs to be in school, therefore saving time and money, often called 3-2 or 3-3 programs. Such programs are most common in engineering, business, social work, education and nursing.

RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS (ROTC) PROGRAMS

ROTC prepares a college student to become an officer in the U.S. military after graduation. ROTC programs offer some scholarships but students compete nationally for this money.



It may be helpful to keep a "college only" calendar. This calendar can include all admission and financial aid deadlines, as well as required application components and SAT/ACT test dates.



Do You Have an IEP or a 504 Plan?

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Students with an IEP or 504 plan in high school face a new challenge when entering college, they must learn an entirely new system of educational laws and how to advocate for themselves. First and foremost, there are no IEP or 504 Plans in college. Rather, to receive accommodations in college, a student must initiate the accommodations request process by self-identifying with the college's Accessibility Services office and providing appropriate documentation. The specific reasonable accommodations are determined through an interactive process between the student and Accessibility Services.

Who should connect with Accessibility Services on a college campus?

Any student with learning differences, physical, medical, emotional or psychiatric disabilities who believes this disability could impact their ability to achieve their academic potential and maximize their educational experience.

Possible questions to ask Accessibility Services before choosing a college:

- What criteria or documentation is required to qualify for accommodations? If testing is needed, who will pay for it?
- What adaptive technologies are available, and who pays for it?
- What type of medical and psychiatric services are available on or near campus? Is there a limit to counseling/health visits per year?
- Does the college offer a transitional summer program to help new students acclimate to school?
- When is the best time for a student to start the accessibility services application process?

Do I have to disclose I have a disability on my application?

No, you do not have to disclose. However, if you feel it is part of your "story" and you want to share, you can disclose. Some students choose to disclose it either in their personal essay or short answer space on their admissions application.

Can a college deny my admission because I have a disability?

No. If you meet the requirements for admission, a college may not deny your admission simply because you have a disability.

Do I have to inform a college that I have a disability once I am admitted?

No. However, if you want the school to provide an accommodation, then yes! A student must identify to the accessibility services office as having a disability.

For more information, visit ncld.org.

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SAT and ACT

Q: HOW CAN COLLEGES USE STANDARDIZED ADMISSION TESTS?

A: In recruitment: Some colleges publish an average score range or scores of previously admitted students as a guide for prospective applicants.

In admission decisions: While colleges report using a combination of factors in determining admission including grades, course rigor, and recommendations, many colleges use SAT or ACT scores to help in the application review process.

In awarding scholarships: Some colleges use SAT or ACT test scores in combination with GPA and other factors to award their institutional merit aid.

Q: WHAT DOES "SUPERSCORING" MEAN?

A: "Superscoring" is when a college takes the highest section scores across all the dates you took the SAT or ACT and adds them together to give you the highest possible combined total score.

Q: DO COLLEGES HAVE A PREFERENCE FOR SAT VS. ACT? HOW DO THEY COMPARE SCORES FROM THE TWO TESTS?

A: Colleges have no preference: Every college that accepts the SAT accepts the ACT and both tests are viewed equally. To compare the scores from the two tests so students can be evaluated fairly, colleges use a concordance table. Doing so allows a college to see what a particular score on the SAT is equal to on the ACT.

In their words: "Either is fine with us, and we don't have a feeling that either favors students with any particular profile." - Marlyn McGrath-Lewis, Director of Admissions at Harvard College, New York Times.

Q: WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF A COLLEGE STATES THEY ARE "TEST OPTIONAL?"

A: "Test optional" is just that - you decide whether you wish to submit your scores: There are more than 1,400 testoptional colleges in the U.S., and the trend is growing. For a full list, visit fairtest.org.

Q: IF SCORES ARE NOT "REQUIRED" BUT "OPTIONAL." SHOULD I SEND MY SCORES OR NOT?

A: In their words: "It's simple. If you think your scores are an accurate representation of your ability, feel free to submit them. If you feel they are not, don't. You won't be penalized." - Wake Forest University

Q: MY SAT SCORE IS STRONG, WITH ALL THESE SCHOOLS GOING "TEST OPTIONAL" WHAT SHOULD I DO?

A: Send them! Just because a college has gone test optional, it doesn't mean they are 'test blind'. Favorable scores, if sent, will be viewed and noted to help paint the full academic picture of a student. For students who choose not to send scores, they are choosing to only highlight their GPA or rigor.

Preparing for Standardized Tests

Studying for tests makes a difference. A 2017 study of 250,000 students completed by The College Board found that studying for the SAT for 20 hours through Khan Academy is associated with an average score gain of 115 points, nearly double the gain for students who do not use Khan Academy.



SAT STUDY GUIDE

khanacademy.org

- Sample questions Free
- Phone App: "Daily Practice for the New SAT" - Free

♦ Khan Academy ACT Academy ★

ACT STUDY GUIDE

act.org

- Sample questions Free
- Downloadable study guide Free

2021-2022 SAT Changes College Board will no longer offer SAT Subject Tests (SAT II's) or

the SAT Essay to "reduce the demands on students during the college application process."

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Get to Know Your Admissions Representative

WHO ARE ADMISSION REPRESENTATIVES?

They are the face of any college. They interact with prospective students to provide information about the college and programs of study, guide students through the application process, and evaluate students by reviewing applications for admission. And, they all want to work with students!

WHY SHOULD I CONNECT WITH AN ADMISSIONS REPRESENTATIVE?

You will want to get on their radar and let them know you are interested in their school, while utilizing their expertise about their campus and its specific admission process. There are so many ways to get to know a campus, but they only have a few ways to get to know you. Take advantage of any face time (in person or virtual) you can get with a college admission representative to become the "face" of your own application.

WAYS TO MEET YOUR ADMISSION REPRESENTATIVE

Attend a college fair
For a list of regional inperson or virtual college
fairs, go to neacac.org

Visit the campus Meet with admissions when you are visiting the campus for a tour or event

Call or email

Have a question about your major, internships, or the admissions process?

Just ask!

Meet at your high school

Ask your school counselor for dates and times colleges are visiting your high school

HOW DO I FIND THE NH ADMISSION REPRESENTATIVE FOR A PARTICULAR COLLEGE?

Most colleges have a "meet the team" page on their admission webpage. Sometimes they identify what area of the country they cover. If the college website does not have this information, simply call the admissions office and ask for the contact information of the admission representative for the NH territory.

WHEN CAN I CONTACT AN ADMISSION REPRESENTATIVE?

Anytime! Never hesitate to reach out to an admissions representative. Many students start making these connections junior year of high school while attending college fairs, during campus tours, or when the representatives visit their high school.

WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK?

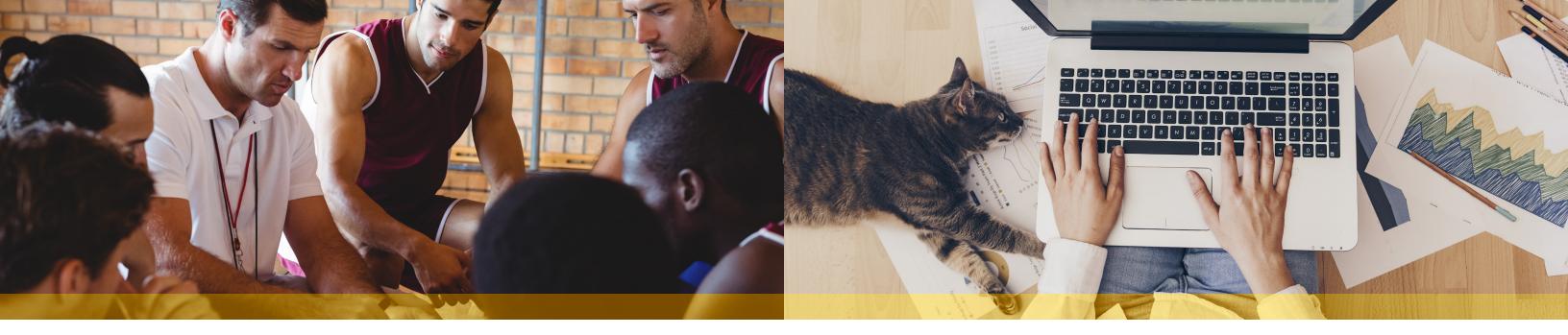
Any topic is fine, whether you want more information about a particular major, internship opportunities, or their perspective on the types of courses you should take senior year to be competitive at their school. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Do you offer many courses in large lecture halls or in small classroom settings?
- Do you require internships or co-ops? What types of opportunities are available for my major?
- What information do you use to award scholarships? GPA? SAT or ACT? Both?
- How easy is it to change my major? Can I enter undecided and then choose a major? What about changing to a more competitive major like nursing, engineering, physical therapy, or pharmacy?



"Demonstrated interest" is a term used to describe how interested an applicant is in enrolling in a particular college. A college can see this interest in a variety of ways: did the student take a tour, attend a virtual information session, or send an email to introduce themselves to their admission representative? It is important to note that demonstrated interest is a "soft" quality that does not replace academic qualifications. However, for very selective schools, even though it won't carry more weight than GPA or activities, demonstrated interest can be a factor in admissions.

12 Starting Your Search



College Athletics

Incorporating college athletics into your college search adds an additional element when choosing the right college for you. Begin identifying college athletic programs in your sophomore or junior year of high school, adhering to all NCAA guidelines to ensure eligibility. Visit eligibilitycenter.org for all NCAA rules and regulations.

QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING RECRUITMENT

What positions will I play on your team?

Understand that the coaching staff may decide to utilize your talents in a new position. What is the roster's depth chart at your possible positions?

Who currently plays in my position?

If there is a former All-American in the position, you may want to take that into consideration. When will they graduate? Will you realistically have the opportunity to play on this campus?

Will college coaches notice me?

Why wait for them to find you? Be proactive! Remember to fill out a student athlete information form on the college's athletic website, where offered.

What should I send to college coaches?

- High school transcript
- Athletic resume
- Game or practice video (upon request)
- Season schedule

Email us for a **FREE** copy of our Student Athlete Guide at

collegeplanning@nhheaf.org.

OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN YOUR DECISION:

What are my responsibilities off the field?

Am I required to maintain a certain weight? Do I have to attend study hours? Will I participate in off-season training?

What are my personal goals?

Would I choose this campus if I were not playing a sport? Does the team have a successful history? Is the team well supported by the college and community?

What are my scholarship opportunities?

Are athletic scholarships available? Where do you stand on the recruiting list? Are you eligible for partial or full scholarships? Are there other financial aid options available for student-athletes?

The College Resume

The college resume focuses on your academic achievements, extracurricular activities, and personal interests. Creating a resume is your chance to list everything you have accomplished throughout your high school career. Keep in mind that

Joe College

100 High School Lane New Hampshire 03000 (603) 225-6612

PROFILE

Energetic, hard-working student skilled in computer software and art. Specific interest and knowledge in graphic design.

ACADEMICS

Any High School, Town, New Hampshire High School Diploma, expected June 2021

- Top 20% of class
- GPA: 3.2 (out of 4.0)
- SAT: EBRW: 530, Math: 610
- National Honor Society, 2018 present

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Varsity Baseball Team, 2017 present Team Captain, 2020
- 2016 State Championship Team Member Robotics Club, 2017 - present
- President 2019 2020 Coordinated 3rd Annual "Learn About Careers in Robotics" conference
- Student Council President, 2020 - 2021

Coordinated Community Service Day

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- Apple Store, Town, NH 2019 present Genius at Genius Bar
- Greater Chamber of Commerce, Town, NH 2019 present Graphic Design Intern Creator, Online Graphics Library
- · Animal Haven, Town, NH 2017 present Volunteer and annual Cleanup Day organizer Lead, Website Redesign Committee

while this resume can supplement your application, you should still fill in everything that's required on the application itself, unless directed otherwise.

Here is a sample resume of a very involved student to demonstrate how to describe different activities- it's okay if you don't have this much to include! Work with your school counselor to identify your relevant experience and build a great resume. For example, do you take care of a younger sibling? Help out with dinner sometimes? That demonstrates responsibility, time management, and skills like child care and cooking-you may have more to add than you think!

List your extracurricular, volunteer, and community activities.

Highlight experiences that relate to your intended major or reveal consistent work experience.

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Preparing to Apply

Types of Admission

Colleges typically provide perspective students with a few admissions options, each with its own deadline and requirements. Investigate each option offered by the colleges of your choice and choose which works best for you.

Early Decision:

- Apply early (usually between October 1 and December 1)
- If accepted, student is OBLIGATED TO ATTEND

Early Action:

- Apply early and find out admission status early
- Student is not obligated to attend if accepted

Regular Decision:

 Meet fixed deadline to be considered for admission

Rolling Admission:

- Applications reviewed on a first-come, firstserved basis
- Applications accepted until class has been filled

Note: Certain majors within a college may have priority deadlines (ex. nursing).

PROS & CONS OF APPLYING EARLY DECISION (ED)

Pros

- ED applicants can demonstrate interest and enthusiasm to their top choice college.
- Statistics show that at some colleges, ED applicants are accepted at a higher rate than regular decision applicants. Example: In 2017, Harvard accepted 14.5% of ED applicants compared to 3.3% of regular decision applicants (according to Wall Street Journal).

Cons

- You will not have a chance to receive or compare financial aid offers from any other colleges.
- The ED applicant pool tends to include highly qualified applicants with strong transcripts and SAT or ACT scores available early in fall of senior year. Some students present as stronger applicants after retaking the SAT or ACT in the fall and sending in their first semester fall grades.

Auditions and Portfolios

AUDITION TIPS

The process of applying to a performing arts program is often more extensive than for other academic programs. Remember that demonstrating your potential is often more important than your current technical expertise. Keep an open mind about any criticism received; constructive feedback provides an opportunity for improvement. Be certain to ask your high school teachers or professional instructors for additional guidance.

PORTFOLIO PRESENTATION TIPS:

- The requirements vary by school and program.
- Pay careful attention to the detailed instructions regarding portfolio submission for each college and provide EXACTLY what is asked.
- Digital submission of your portfolio is required by most college programs even if you visit campus for an in-person review.
- Many schools use SlideRoom or similar apps for you to upload your work (be aware that there may be a cost for submission to each school).
- If you don't have as much experience in your area of interest, explore programs that place more emphasis on your grades than your portfolio.



National Portfolio Days:

Experienced art college representatives will review your portfolio and offer presentation critique. Your portfolio can include finished pieces or works in progress.

Visit **nationalportfolioday.org** for a list of campuses hosting these free events.

The 2-2-2 Approach

PUTTING YOUR COLLEGE LIST TOGETHER

When you are choosing your list of colleges, we recommend that you select a diverse group of schools in an effort to have a balanced approach to your process. Typically we recommend applying to between six and eight colleges. In our office, we talk about the 2-2-2 approach. In this approach, we separate the schools into three categories – probable, target, and reach – and suggest finding at least two schools in each category.

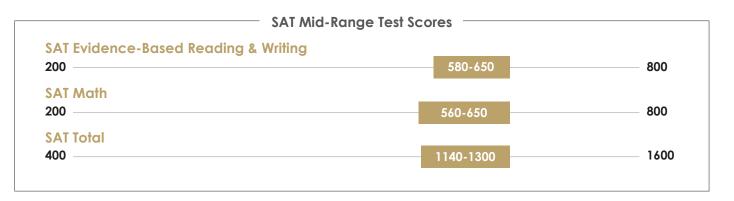
It's important when building your list that you only include schools that you'd strongly consider attending if you were accepted. Applying to colleges just to fill your list not only is a waste of your time, but you could also take away a spot from a student who really wants to go there! Do the work upfront to find 6-8 schools that you can actually see yourself attending.

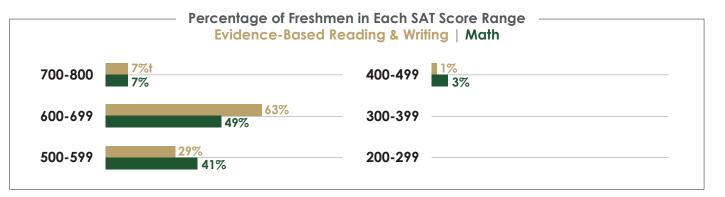
Probable: Your cumulative GPA and SAT scores are higher than the average student admitted

Target: Your cumulative GPA and SAT scores are on par with the average student admitted

Reach: Your cumulative GPA and SAT scores are slightly below the average student admitted, but not so much lower that you do not think you could be accepted

Use charts like these, available on bigfuture.org, to help you access if a school is a probable, target or reach.







Apply to at least one college that is financially affordable for your family in case the financial aid awards from other colleges do not provide enough aid to make it possible for you to attend. This college, known as a "financial safety" school, should be one that you like and would want to attend.

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Preparing to Apply



The Common App

WHAT IS THE COMMON APP?

The Common App is an online admission application that is accepted by over 900 colleges and universities. Participating schools accept the Common Application in place of their own institutional application. Students complete one form and send it to all their chosen participating colleges. Using this form is time-saving and simplifies the application process. The Common Application and a list of participating schools can be found at **commonapp.org**.

Notify your school counselor when applying online; they will assist you in forwarding your transcript and the necessary materials to the college. Most colleges will not consider your application complete until all pieces have been received.

To make the application process easier, have the following information in front of you when starting your application:

- High school transcript official or unofficial for individual course and grade information
- Activities list extra curricular, volunteer and work experience
- SAT and/or ACT scores for each test, date(s) test were taken or will be taken
- Parent/step-parent/legal guardian information including occupation, employment status, and education level. If applicable, which college(s) they attended and how many degrees they have earned.

ACTIVITY SECTION: TIPS

- Common App limits students to ten (10) activities.
- "Activities include arts, athletics, clubs, employment, personal commitments, volunteer opportunities and other pursuits." In other words, pretty much anything pursued outside the classroom qualifies as an activity. For example, having a part-time job or a family responsibility such as caring for a younger sibling is considered an activity on Common App.
- Quality over quantity. There is no judgment made about the number of activities you have. The college is simply trying to get an idea of what you are doing when you are not at school. Some students will participate in one activity (i.e. karate, dance etc.) multiple hours a week. While other students will participate in a variety of different activities throughout the school year but spend less time overall completing those activities.
- What if you have more than 10 activities to include? You will need to make a cut. Think strategically. If you are heavy in "Athletics" type activities, you may want to highlight other types of interests.

COVID-19 and the College Application

Although COVID-19 has made the college application season feel different, colleges are still going to evaluate students based on the same criteria they have in the past with the same goal in mind. In the most basic terms, colleges read your application to see if you are a good fit (academically and socially) for their campus and vice versa, if they are a good fit for you. To determine that, colleges need to collect the same information they have in years past. So to both acknowledge the COVID-19 uniqueness to your high school years and still collect pertinent information, the over 900 colleges using the Common App have agreed to the following statement and plan put out by Common App:

"We (Common App) want to provide colleges with the information they need, with the goal of having students answer COVID-19 questions only once while using the rest of the application as they would have before to share their interests and perspectives beyond COVID-19."

This COVID-19 question allows for students to share any COVID-19 concerns while still providing the other college application information. It is important to note that this question is 100% optional and a student's application will not be negatively impacted if this question is left blank.

Students will be asked the following:

- Do you wish to share anything on this topic? Y/N
- If you answer YES to the above question, you will be given space to provide the following information:
 Community disruptions such as COVID-19 and natural disasters can have deep and long-lasting impacts. If you need it, this space is yours to describe those impacts. Colleges care about the effects on your health and well-being, safety, family circumstances, future plans, and education, including access to reliable technology and quiet study spaces. (250 word limit)

How Colleges Evaluate Applications

In the review of applicants, the focus is on your academic record (high school transcript) as demonstrated by performance, achievement, and rigor. While each college may have its own set of admissions criteria, many will also consider your college essay, extracurricular activities, standardized tests, and letters of recommendation.

HOW DO COLLEGES KNOW HOW TO UNDERSTAND MY HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT?

Every high school transcript is accompanied by a School Profile. This profile acts as a key to your transcript; it allows colleges to understand a specific high school's grade point system, weighting system (if applicable), rigor of courses offered, competency systems, etc. Colleges have been reading transcripts from public schools, private schools, home school and even international schools for decades. They are very comfortable using the school profile to understand the information found on your transcript.



How will colleges see the changes my school made due to COVID-19? School counselors will have space on the Common App counselor forms to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on your school community. Such things they can note include:

- Grading scales and policies
- Schedules and course offerings
- Graduation requirements
- Testing requirements
- Instructional methods
- Your academic calendar

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Preparing to Apply

The College Essay

Who reads your college essay? Oftentimes, no more than one to three admission representatives read both your essay and application. It is not a large committee that will sit around "critiquing" your essay.

Who does not read your college essay? The dean, professors from your desired major, and English/creative writing professors will not read your essay. You do not need to be the best "creative writer" nor do you have to impress the dean with how much you already know about your intended major.

How important is the college essay? As with most of the college application process, there is no definitive answer. Colleges may weigh aspects of the application package differently, but in very few cases will a student be accepted or rejected because of just the essay. Typically, the essay becomes most important for marginal candidates. While a fantastic essay cannot make up for poor high school grades, it can be a factor when an admission decision could go either way.

Do I choose the topic? While most colleges present students with a choice of topics, some will allow you to choose your own topic. What you choose to write about will reveal your creativity, personality, and value system to the admissions committee.

What are colleges looking for in a college admissions essay? Colleges are typically looking for four main elements:

- A sample of the applicant's writing ability
- To get a sense of who the student is as a person
- To see if the student would be a "good fit" for their college
- To assess the applicant's ability to think critically

Why is demonstrating critical thinking important? Demonstrating critical thinking can show a college that an applicant is ready to engage in a higher learning environment. No matter a student's intended major, every college student is expected to learn to think critically about the subjects they are studying, research they are conducting, and projects they are preparing.

How can I demonstrate critical thinking? No matter the topic you choose to write about, take time in your essay to show some analysis or understanding of the topic in a bigger sense. Have you learned a lesson, do you plan to act differently or make changes because of something you observed or experienced? Is what you have experienced similar to a bigger issue within society? Don't just TELL a story about an experience, but rather SHOW how you have learned from or thought critically about your experience.

Essay Tips

DO

Engage the reader. Capture interest with a strong intro or unique perspective on an everyday topic or event.

Own it. Be authentic and speak in your voice.

Tell a story. Rather than list all your accomplishments, tell a story that illustrates one or two positive character traits or accomplishments.

Proofread. Give yourself time to step away and come back and read it with fresh eyes.

DON'T:

Rely on a thesaurus. It is okay to demonstrate your use of language, but don't use certain words to impress if everyday language would sound more authentic.

Focus on the "Three D's." Death, Divorce and Depression. If you do choose one of these topics, focus on how the events changed you or helped you grow.

Use slang. Do not use texting language (ex. lol, btw, or omg).

Offend the reader. It is okay to share your opinions, just be sure not to judge or disparage those who don't share them.



Exploring Ways to Pay

Know the Cost of Applying to College

Applying to college can be costly, but having a good understanding of what money you will need and when you will need it can give you time to budget and save. Below is a list of different expenses associated with the college application process and when you may experience them.

STANDARDIZED TESTING EXPENSES (Fall and/or Spring Junior Year and Fall Senior Year of High School)

Both the SAT and the ACT have fees attached to registering and taking the test as well as sending scores to individual colleges.

COLLEGE VISITS & TOURS (Spring Junior and Fall Senior Year of High School)

Although touring a campus is "free," if you need to travel any significant distance to visit the school, you may need to budget money to make the trip. Expenses can include gas, airfare, hotel stays, and eating multiple meals on the road.

COLLEGE APPLICATION FEES (Fall or Winter Senior Year of High School)

Application fees are the cost to apply to a given school. These fees can range from \$25 to \$100 per school.* Some colleges offer fee waivers to students who use their institutional application or took a tour.

*Some fee waivers available for those who qualify for Free & Reduced Priced Lunch. Ask your counselor for details.

FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION FEES (Fall or Winter Senior Year of High School)

First, remember that the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is always just that: **FREE**. However, over 400 colleges in the country require an EXTRA financial aid form called the CSS Profile®. The CSS Profile® form is not free. To see a full list of schools requiring this form go to **cssprofile.org**.

ADMISSION DEPOSIT (Spring Senior Year of High School)

Once you have decided what college you will attend, you must pay a deposit to confirm your attendance and save your space at the school; this is called an Admission Deposit.* The Admission Deposit can range from \$100 to upwards of \$500. This fee is due by May 1st.

*If providing your admission deposit will be difficult, contact the college's admissions office immediately to see what they advise.

HOUSING DEPOSIT (Spring Senior Year of High School)

If you are going to be living on campus at your college of choice, you will need to pay a deposit to save your space with the housing department. **This fee is in addition to the admission deposit.** It is set by the school itself and can range from \$100 to \$400.

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The Financial Aid Offer

The financial aid process may seem complicated, but in its simplest form, it comes down to understanding five steps:

- 1. You must complete the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** after October 1 for the next academic year. Check with each of the colleges to which you apply for specific deadlines. Be certain to find out from each college if any other supplemental forms (such as the **CSS Profile® Application**) are required in addition to the FAFSA.
- 2. After completing the FAFSA, your information is submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. The Department calculates, based on a complex methodology, your ability to pay for college. Your ability to pay is called the **Expected Family Contribution (EFC)**. The factors used in determining the EFC include: parent/guardian and student annual income and assets, family size, number of family members attending college, taxes paid, and more.
- 3. The Department of Education sends the FAFSA information, including the EFC, to every school you list on the FAFSA. The financial aid office subtracts your EFC from the **Cost of Attendance (COA)** to determine your eligibility for financial aid.
- 4. The financial aid office calculates, based on the campus' available resources, the amount of financial aid the institution is able to offer the family (remember that just because a student is eligible for a certain amount of financial aid does not mean the student is guaranteed to receive that amount. The unmet need is called the GAP).
- 5. The financial aid office sends the student a **Financial Aid Offer** that details the amount of financial aid the college is able to offer the student. The aid is broken into four categories: loans, grants, scholarships, and work-study.

FILE YOUR FINANCIAL AID FORMS ONLINE:

FAFSA on the Web CSS Profile® Online studentaid.gov cssprofile.org

For more detailed information on the finanial aid process, check out NHHEAF's Financial Aid Insider!



Public colleges receive some funding from the state whereas private colleges do not. Private colleges typically have a higher price tag, but don't let that number dissuade you from applying as there may be grants and scholarships to help decrease the overall cost.

EXAMPLE A		EXAMPLE B		
Cost of Attendance - EFC	\$55,000 \$15,000	Cost of Attendance - EFC	\$33,000 \$15,000	
= Eligibility for Aid	\$40,000	= Eligibility for Aid	\$18,000	
- Aid Offered*	\$24,500	Aid Offered*	\$9,500	
= GAP	\$15,500	= GAP	\$8,500	
* aid often includes federal st	udent loans	* aid often includes federal student loans		

GAP + EFC = the amount to be paid by the family in order to cover college expenses

Example A = \$30,500

Example B = \$23,500

Applying for Scholarships

It is estimated that \$7.4 billion in scholarships are available each year. Remember, every dollar you earn through scholarships is a dollar you do not have to borrow!

LOCAL AND REGIONAL SOURCES

These scholarships often have local and regional residency requirements making a student's pool of competition smaller and chances of winning higher.

New Hampshire Charitable Foundation (nhcf.org) is the largest source of private scholarship aid in New Hampshire. They award over \$6 million

in scholarships to New Hampshire students annually. The student does not need to attend a college in New Hampshire to receive a scholarship, but they do have to be a New Hampshire resident to apply. Each year approximately 1 in 5 applicants receive an award. Below are their programs and deadlines:

Start your scholarship

search in the school

counseling office at

your high school.

Statewide Student Aid Program

Enrolling in 4-year degree program (due mid April)

Career Aid to Technical Students Program

Enrolling in 2-year degree program (due mid June)

NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP SOURCES

These scholarships are available to students from all over the country making a student's pool of competition very large and chances of winning lower.

fastweb.com – This free matching service for scholarships offers a database of over 3 billion in national scholarships.

collegeboard.org – This national scholarship search engine can help you find scholarships and other financial aid from more than 2,200 programs, totaling nearly \$6 billion.

scholarships.com – This database holds over 3.5 million national scholarships and provides nearly \$19 billion to help students pay for college. Download their app to track scholarships!

scholarshipowl.com – This website streamlines the application process by having students complete one application. Once complete, the matching begins.

scholarships360.org – Rather than a database of billions of scholarships, this site selects quality scholarship opportunities and profiles a select number of reputable scholarships.

maldef.org - Scholarships for Latinx students and students of varying documentation status.

iefa.org - Scholarship opportunities for international students.

For scholarship alerts and other college planning tips, follow Th NHHEAF Network on Facebook and Twitter.

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Exploring Ways to Pay

Ways to Reduce College Costs

BEFORE YOU GO

- Take Running Start courses. Students have the opportunity to take community colleges courses for high school and college credit for a discounted rate. Also because of the state's scholarship program, students can take up to two STEM courses for free. Go to ccsnh.edu for more information.
- **Start at a community college.** Consider starting at a community college and transfer earned credits to a participating 4-year college.
- Take advantage of discounted out-of-state tuition if your intended major is not offered at one of our state's colleges or universities.

Tuition Break For New Hampshire Residents: The New England Board of Higher Education's (NEBHE) Tuition Break program, the New England Regional Student Program (RSP), provides a discount on out-of-state tuition to New Hampshire residents when they enroll in approved degree programs at specific state colleges and universities in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Vermont. New Hampshire residents are eligible for these degree programs because they are not offered by any of the New Hampshire state colleges or universities. Visit **nebhe.org/tuitionbreak** for more information.

- Ask about health insurance. Some colleges require students to have major medical insurance while attending their college. If the college has this requirement, they may also build in the cost for purchasing major medical insurance through their institution into the tuition bill. Check your bill closely, and if you do not need health insurance, ask the college to waive this cost with proof of outside insurance.
- Consider return on investment. Research the average salary for your desired profession and then look at the amount of debt you will be incurring at the schools you have chosen. Is there one school that will allow you a more comfortable loan repayment considering your future earning potential? See page 3 for more information on leading your college search career-first to help ensure your return on investment.
- Work while going to college. Do you want to work and go to school part-time? Some employers offer tuition reimbursement benefits for employees.

ONCE ON CAMPUS

- Rent or borrow textbooks. From buying to renting, new or used, hard bound or e-books, explore all your textbook
 options and choose the best economical fit for you. There is no obligation to get your books from your campus
 store, which tends to be the most expensive option. Instead, check out these sites: chegg.com, amazon.com, and
 textbooks.com.
- **Use the college library resources.** Often class textbooks are in the library's collection. Speak with a librarian to see if your required books are available.
- Apply to become a resident advisor/assistant (RA). This is a student who is responsible for supervising and assisting other, typically younger, students who live in a residence hall. Many RAs are compensated with discounted or even free room and board.
- Choose the right meal plan. There are several meal plans to choose from. Remember that if you do not eat the food, you do not get reimbursed. Choose the meal plan that is realistic for you.
- Leave your car at home. Parking permits, gas, and car maintenance quickly add up. Need to get somewhere? Explore campus and public transportation options.
- Continue applying for scholarships once you are in college. Check with the financial aid office or the office of your college major; colleges and even specific majors often have their own available scholarships.

Online Resources

College Savings, Financial Aid, and Scholarships

FINANCIAL AID FORMS

studentaid.gov - File the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).

cssprofile.org - File the CSS Profile® financial aid form required by certain private colleges.

ONE-STOP FINANCIAL AID SITE

studentaid.gov – Learn about:

- Federal Direct & PLUS Loan programs
- Loan repayment and forgiveness options
- Your existing federal loan balance

PRIVATE LOAN PROGRAMS

nhheaf.org/pdfs/handouts/Possible_Private_Loan_

Programs.pdf - While it is recommended that you maximize federal loans first, private loans can help you fill a remaining funding gap. NHHEAF's EDvestinU private loan has discounted rates and exceptional service for NH students and families.

COLLEGE AND YOUR TAXES

irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals - Federal tax benefits for higher education.

BUDGETING & SAVING FOR COLLEGE

savingforcollege.com - Provides objective information about Section 529 plans and Coverdell education savings plans.

Admissions and Career Planning

SAT & ACT INFO

khanacademy.org - Official free SAT® test prep website. **collegeboard.org** - Official website of the SAT Test. **act.org** - Official website of the ACT Test.

fairtest.org - Lists all test-optional postsecondary schools

COLLEGE APPLICATIONS ONLINE

commonapp.org - Official website for the Common Application used for over 900 institutions.

CAREER SURVEYS & INFORMATION

careeronestop.org - Sponsored by the US Dept. of Labor. Research salary information by occupation and location.

nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator - Sponsored by the US Dept. of Education to research colleges.

mynextmove.org - Sponsored by the US Dept. of Labor for career exploration tools, job analysis and questionnaires.

COLLEGE FAIRS & EVENTS

neacac.org - Regional college fair dates, times, and locations.

nacacnet.org - National college fair dates, times and

destinationcollege.org - NHHEAF's college convention for NH high school juniors & parents.

International Colleges

CANADIAN SCHOOLS

univcan.ca

campusstarter.com

educanada.ca

studyincanada.com

UNITED KINGDOM SCHOOLS

study-uk.britishcouncil.org

britishcouncil.us/study-uk

thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk

ucas.com/how-it-all-works/international

VISA INFORMATION

canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/ study-canada

gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/student-visas

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College Application Checklist

ADMISSIONS

NANCIAL AID

	College 1	College 2	College 3	College 4	College 5	College 6
	College	College 2	Conege o	College 4	College 3	College o
Name of school						
Do they use Common App, or their own app?						
Do they require SAT or ACT scores?						
Admission application deadline						
Application fee						
Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Deadline						
CSS Profile® needed? Deadline						
Miscellaneous						



There are TWO major deadlines for each college. The admission deadline is for submitting your application to the college. The financial aid deadline is for submitting required financial aid forms. These two deadlines can be the same or different depending on the college. So always check both!



Need help with your financial aid paperwork? We're here for you!

To schedule a free appointment to file your FAFSA with support from one of our college counselors, go to calendly.com/nhheaf_ccp.

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How We Can Help

Timeline:	What We Offer:
Freshman through Senior Year	College Planning and Financial Aid Presentations – FREE presentations for students and families across the state of NH on a variety of college topics
	Check with your school counseling office or nhheaf.org to see our calendar of when we are in your community.
Spring of Junior Year	Destination College SM – FREE day of college planning workshops and college fair – for current high school juniors and families destinationcollege.org
Spring of Junior Year through Fall of Senior Year	College Counseling Appointment – Appointment with student and family to discuss college planning and the admission and financial aid processes
Summer Before Senior Year	Summer Boot Camp Workshops – Workshops for rising high school seniors focused on helping them write the college essay or start their Common Application
Fall of Senior Year	Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Filing Appointment – Appointment to help file this important federal financial aid form any time after October 1st of the year you need to file
Winter and Spring of Senior Year	Funding Options Appointment - Appointment to review financial aid offers and discuss options to pay for college any time after a student receives their financial aid award

For all appointment booking, go to calendly.com/nhheaf_ccp.



Center for College Planning

nhheaf.org (888) 747-2382 x119 4 Barrell Court, Concord NH, 03301

